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Papillomas, warts, and related neoplasms: forms of generative cancers

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"PAPILLOMAS, WARTS, AND RELATED NEOPLASMS"

(forms of generative cancers)

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Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts Degree in the College of Photographic Arts and Sciences of the Rochester Institute of Technology

December 1973

John Pfahl

Bradley Hindson

Arnold Sorvari

10/11/77

10/11/77

6924762

Dedicated to:

Richard M. Nixon, who forced me to stay home during his gasless Sundays so that this could be written.

To Benson Caswell and Harvey Osterhoudt whose sense of process needs no further explanation.

To MACYS for that fabulous televised Thanksgiving Day parade.

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One 4 X 5 transparency of thesis

30 slides of thesis

One Actual print from Thesis

Introduction

Being convinced that a thesis report of a visual arts presentation should neither be a mere procedural listing nor a book report of the work completed and since it is possible that in years from now, some student might want to read the enclosed, I have endeavored to prepare this contribution so that it is both informative and elucidating.

In June 1973 I proposed to execute a "closed visual system of transformation utilizing techniques of color photographic assemblage." The final work consisted of thirty color prints set in a grid system, measuring on a wall 48 inches by 50 inches. Each print consisted of a major image in the upper portion of the 8 X 10 paper with a five framed contact strip underneath. The repetition and alternation accompanied by various correlations of color, shape, content, and order of both upper and lower images provided the elements by which the spectator was invited to engage in its play.

Aesthetic Statement

In his attempt to define the energy levels of aesthetic production, Marcel Duchamp formulated an equation that he called the Art Co-efficient. He wrote that "the artist goes from intention to realization, through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle towards the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the aesthetic plane."¹ The difference, for Duchamp, between the beginning intention and the work of art as a culmination of all the complex decisions, trials, and errors, provided a measure of the aesthetic process. For Duchamp, that aesthetic process included a rich and fundamental understanding of parameters of play and the nature of juxtaposing realities that could be defined and determined by any given set of rules. The jumps of reality that he delighted in with his readymades demonstrated his concern for the transcendence from an everyday reality of a bicycle handle bar to a newer level of perception.

For months, President Nixon has been citing national security as the reason for authorizing establishment of the secret White House invest-

Certainly, the movement from the nineteenth century concept that "art was but an extract from life"² to the 20th century idea that aesthetic events are self-sufficient energy systems was important to Duchamp, but he took that for granted. Since Duchamp considered that "all chess players are artists,"³ the process of that reality jump was important. In a sense, Duchamp dealt with a state of "perpetual check."

His continued exploration and struggle with the process of boundaries, rules, and realities, was in effect an attempt to elucidate upon the nature of that very manipulation.

An aesthetic event essentially is a matrix of selection. It is play. As defined by Johan Huizinga, "play is an activity which proceeds within certain limits of time and space in a visible order, according to rules freely accepted and outside the sphere of necessity or material utility. In nearly all the higher forms of play, the elements of repetition and alternation are like the warp and woof of the fabric."⁴ We can recognize that many forms of activity fall into a play classification. But it is that "higher" form of play, as found in an aesthetic event that concerns us. And it is that "jump of reality," that was of concern to Duchamp.

igation unit known as the plumbers and as justification for restricting some aspects of the Watergate inquiry.

It is possible to freely accept a minimum of givens. Firstly, art is not of an everyday reality. It rises above the "trivial plane,"⁵ of everyday life. Secondly, art represents an uncommonly high level of human expression. Thirdly, that art is definitely an experience unto itself. Alain Robbe Grillet put it: "If art is anything, it is everything; in which case it must be self-sufficient, and there can be nothing beyond it."⁶

Therefore, we have a very special level of process and selection within

a rarified atmosphere of creative energy usage. It is the special essence of this "warp and woof of the fabric," that concerns us.

Duchamp recognized by implication that his Art Coefficient, if translated graphically, represented a rising mathematical slope of the "efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, and decisions," of the aesthetic event. Reiterating the significance of manipulation, Albers concludes that art is performance and "its the change of performance, not expression,"⁷ that is exciting.

Huizinga postulates that play itself is based upon the "manipulation of certain images on a certain imagination of reality," and further explains that "our main concern will be to grasp the value and significance of these images and their imagination."⁸ While he recognizes a "certain imagination of reality," within the whole of realities, he fails to elucidate that very value or level of such manipulation. That such manipulation occurs in the fine arts is acknowledged by Huizinga, for "the affinity between poetry and play is not external only. It is also apparent in the structure of creative imagination itself."⁹ Unfortunately he implies that manipulated images must be elements that are clearly obvious.

Inspiration may be free and vehement when (the artist) he conceives but in its execution it is always subjected to the skill and proficiency of the forming hand.¹⁰

He safely identifies only those elements that are clearly in plain sight, for the warp and woof of the fabric.

If therefore the play element is to all appearances lacking in the execution of a work of plastic art, in the contemplation and enjoyment of it there is no scope for it whatsoever. For where there is no visible action there can be no play.¹¹

Huizinga either demonstrates his lack of familiarity with his own theory or cannot juxtapose those areas of the arts with which he may not be entirely conversant.

The President has never given any details of his national security concerns, noting that they were "highly sensitive matters."

It could be interpreted that Huizinga allows for play in "the execution of a work of art," but his definite observation that execution "always" is subjected to an implied non-playing technical hand seems to rule out his own chance at ambiguity. It seems that his confusion lies in an inability to recognize the emotive or responsive elements that confront us in the plastic arts, for in the literary arts, he identifies them clearly in an example from correspondence between Shaw and Terry.

Mummy, mummy, I've found a carrot as big..as big as God.¹¹

Gertrude Stein used words as malleable entities much like a sculptor uses clay. Play was for her, both in the act of creation and in perception. Her elements or manipulative forces are based on the power of words to exist, sui generis, unto themselves. Explaining the dichotomy of representational symbols in painting, she wrote, "A picture exists for and in itself and the painter has to use objects, landscapes, and people, as a way the only way that he is able to get the picture to exist."¹²

Ezra Pound points to Chinese ideographs as examples of power embodied in the distillation of elements to their most unencumbered correspondence.

Pound named three methods of "charging words" with meaning, by: (1) throwing the object (fixed or moving) on to the visual imagination; (2) by inducing emotional correlations by the sound and rhythm of the speech; and (3) by inducing both of the effects by stimulating the associations (intellectual and emotional) that have remained in the receiver's consciousness in relation to the actual words or word groups employed.¹³ In no way was he providing a literary formula, just giving essences of the manipulative elements that may provide for higher realities of a given piece of writing. He sets up a hierarchy that fixes the nature of correspondences and associations. Pound for pound, "Literature is news that stays news."¹⁴ In How to Read, Pound reiterates that "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost degree."¹⁵ In a value system of greater and greater literature, Pound espouses that the degree of condensation, the economy of element usage in achieving the greatest "charge" determines the level of aesthetic achievement.

Specifically, the sources said, the White House feared that Dr. Ellsberg, a former Rand Corporation and Defense Department official may have been

But what is this charging? How is it affected? Arnheim states that "the human mind receives, shapes, and interprets its image of the outer world with all its conscious and unconscious powers and the realm of the unconscious could never enter our experience without the reflection of perceivable things. There is no way of presenting one without the other."¹⁶ By implication, he is telling us that there is a jump that we make, continually between the conscious and unconscious, between different codes of choice.

Jumping realities is the thesis of Piaget's structuralist inquiries. In his transformational analysis of correspondences he recognizes that a given set can be measured and defined "solely in terms of the set of transformations."¹⁷ The Duchampian slope, if you will, becomes evident in Piaget's analysis that "the forms of what originally appeared to be pure content in turn, themselves have content, though less distinctly made out, a content with its own form and so on indefinitely, each element being "content" relative to some prior element and form for some posterior element."¹⁸ Godel called the nesting of forms of correlational form and content, a step towards "greater or lesser power."¹⁹ The ascending gradient of correlational manipulation of elements is echoed by Piaget in the postulation that an element becomes "simultaneously the form to the content it subsumes and content for some higher form."²⁰

Structural transformation is found according to Chomsky in linguistics whereby sensori motor acts are an activity of assimilation and accommodation, primary to all communication. The efficacy of transformation is evidenced by its ability to function by the rules that its structure reveals. Buhler elaborates on that in analyzing ascending degrees of thought, first as a state of consciousness; second as a consciousness of the rules involved in relational structures; and lastly as an intentional usage of synthetic thought systems.

Both photographer and aesthetician, Frederic Sommer presents a synthetic system as a matrix of proper display. Within "display"²¹ are the positions of display and the "occupiers" of those positions. Linkages within

the display create the "charge" of the elements within the system. Aesthetic values are rooted, for Sommer, in the perception of context and process of a given subject. Understanding of both, which are harmonious causalities, can determine the most advantageous position of display within a larger matrix or schema of other so-understood occupiers. Linkages and their efficient use may be a stepping stone, a function of reality jumping.

In a critique of Gore Vidal's Women's Lib article in the New York Review of Books, Richard Poirier scores improper linkages.

Vidal perhaps could not resist the dictates of alliteration between Manson and Mailer..we could have been spared the connection if Manson had been named Samson. The attempt to connect Mailer's wounding of his third wife during a quarrel with the fiendish premeditated murders of Manson was highly unfair.²²

In Love's Body, Norman O. Brown wrote that "meaning is not in things but in between." In conjunction with theories of proper position of display of occupiers, Clement Greenburg hints at the reductionist process of reality jumping, where increased minimalism must likewise be correlated with well scrutinized placement of minimalist elements.

Modernism has found that these limiting conditions can be pushed back indefinitely before a picture stops being a picture and turns into an arbitrary object; but it also has found that the further back these limits are pushed the more explicitly they have to be observed.²³

An aesthetic event presupposes the presence of artist or spectator or artist as spectator. There is no question that a falling tree creates noise in a forest, but its reality depends upon the perception of it by a set of ears. Similarly, in a work of art, "the important relation is

not between two or more forms on a surface but between itself as a complex event and the spectator."²⁴

a Soviet intelligence informer who in the weeks after publication of the Pentagon papers in June 1971 was capable of turning over details of the Highlighting the "activation of space by interconnections of structures of energy actually opposed in physical science and their construction into space which likewise functions as energy," Moholy Nagy formulated his Dynamic Constructive Energy System.²⁵ He saw that the instantaneous transmutation and integration of single elements "into a coherent whole" was a measure for aesthetic events. In a hierarchial order he created a pattern that the beholder might undergo to achieve a "heightening of his powers in becoming an active factor in the play of forces."

Vision in motion is seeing while moving.
Vision in motion is seeing moving objects either in reality or in forms of visual presentation as in cubism/futurism.
In the latter case, the spectator stimulated by the specific means of rendering recreates mentally and emotionally the original motion.
Vision in motion is simultaneous grasp.
Simultaneous grasp is creative performance..seeing, feeling, thinking in relationship and not as a series of isolated phenomena.²⁶

In Synectics, Gordon defines it as the "joining together of different and apparently irrelevant elements."²⁷ His own art coefficient or "elegance of solution" is the ratio of a multiplicity of variables divided by the simplicity of solution. He rejects the mere stringing together of metaphors as "nonproductive." It is that sense of distillation that Einstein seems to reveal in his characterization of

"clear images."

The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be 'voluntarily' reproduced and combined..This combinatory play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought.²⁸

These aesthetic events that seem to oscillate towards the most functional unity from a multiplicity of variables are able to be self-generative, to energize what Moholy Nagy might term, a dynamic constructive energy system, or a "coherent nesting of correlational elements." Huizinga might well be aghast.

In the course of the creative process, the individual responsible for the creative activity must permit what has been constructed to have its own life, to lead on.²⁹

most closely held nuclear targeting secrets of the United States, which were contained in a highly classified document known as the Single Integrated Operation Plans, or S.I.O.P.

In championing the bi-associative processes, Arthur Koestler first recognizes the complexity of aesthetic processes; rooting them in the neuro-chemical activities of the body and then identifies that it is the reality jumping process rather than the number of elements available that is most troublesome.

The difficulty of analyzing the aesthetic experience is not due to its irreducible quality but to the wealth of the unconscious and non-verbal character of the matrices which interlace it along ascending gradients in various dimensions.³⁰

He attaches to the ascending gradient, a "caloric value" or a measure of the correlationship of elements. Koestler sees the entire creative process on an overview basis that is a complex matrix of hierarchial environments and feedbacks that interconnect on a criterion of relevance within those interconnections.

The Artist rules his subjects by turning them into accomplices.³¹

Koestler works towards an evolutionary hierarchy of triggered responses in the context of the parasympathetic functions or "participatory emotions," (as opposed to the adrenal-toxic or self-assertive active emotions.) The most complex fusion of independent matrices is a balancing act of differentiated and specialized structures within "complex and delicate integrations of function."³² Those integrations can at the highest level attain "a vibrational intensity" that "strikes archetypal chords."³³

For months President Nixon has been citing national security as the reason for authorizing establishment of the secret White House investigation unit known as the plumbers and as justification for restricting some aspects of the Watergate inquiry.

Though Koestler does not buy the entire Jungian theory, he does insist that the inductive nature of the aesthetic experience, its specificity reaching for generalities must be read as a path to some ultimate. Taillard de Chardin called it the "Omega Point."³⁴

Calendar of Procedures

Thirty 8 X 10 images resulted from both the projection of 35mm transparencies and the subsequent contact printing of correlated five framed color negative strips below or as in the 30th print, across the projected image.

Technical problems amounted to discovering the optimum working density that a 35mm transparency might have for projection printing. Unlike printing broad range negative materials, reversal images often had highlights that made projection useless. During the original in camera exposure, slight over-exposure was beneficial, providing a less saturated and contrasty transparency.

Projection of reversal materials resulted in the final print exhibiting "reversed" colors. Greens in the slide gave magenta in the print; reds gave blues; etc..all quite predictable. Occasionally a transparency would have the crossed-curve characteristic that rendered making the desired and predicted color printed image impossible. For the most part, the transparencies were created with the resultant print color scheme preconceived.

In a mechanical sense, the utilization of effective masking procedures for the printing and contacting was of major importance. By careful use of metal foils, hinges, tape, and glass, the desired effect was achieved. It is truly amazing, just how much one can see in the normally dim illumination provided by color printing safelights.

Processing of both slides and color negatives were by commercial labs. Printed images were made on Unicolor paper with Unicolor chemistry. Unicolor proved to be quite satisfactory. Though it does not differentiate on a color gray scale the finest nuances that Kodak color print materials are able to demonstrate, it had more than enough potential for the procedures and color schemes in this work. Most disappointing about Unicolor is its lack of a good fire engine red. Its cyan, magenta, and overall crispness more than made up for it.

Equipment:

Nikon camera equipment

Omega Dichroic Color Head

Unicolor print and chemicals

Agfa and Kodak transparency materials

Kodacolor negative film

Kodak Rapid Drum processer

Plexiglas exhibition frames (to filter UV from color print surface)

Related Problems:

Historically, all serious conjecturing about my thesis plans were centered about the use of color. In early thesis planning, concerns were for the most part centered around an infatuation with dance and dancers. Confusion about the difference between dance idea versus dance body or in more blunt terms; between dance as an aesthetic phenomenon versus my own sexual projections caused vacillation between photographing dancers and dance per se and the sexuality that I attached to them. That is not to say that sexuality can be divorced from dance, for sexual energy is very much a part of body movement, but sexuality like any other element in an aesthetic event, must function in harmony with its other elemental partners, not as an excuse.

Plans were underway to work intensively with a dancer whom I had photographed previously. It was to be an exploration of both the person as dancer and that relationship with the photographer. Such planning never came to fruition due to a massive auto accident suffered by me. The destruction of my auto changed my lifestyle for several months and prompted re-examination of some thesis presumptions. Still committed to color I began to examine the particularistic imagery that has been most important to me. Coming up with visions of sugar plums, balloons, and a sense of urban iconography, I embarked upon a reconceived notion of interrelated color forms in repetition; playing upon varying levels of dominance..all set in a grid system.

Grid systems can be dangerous. They not only guarantee a format and possibly promote simple solutions but can also encourage static imagery through an imbalance of form and function. The same can be said for any model indiscreetly applied to an aesthetic event. But models do function, as long as they remain identified as such and permit the "real thing" to run with its own internal energy.

In that regard, with certain imagery in mind (bearing the contextual theme of the work) I proceeded to freely photograph without referring to a model. At this time, though, I knew I wanted to work with the freedom that both transparency and color negative provided, so anything that I photographed, necessarily was recorded with two photographic film materials.

In reviewing returning pictures, I decided to look at them in a choreographic manner (relating photos in modified ABA etc patterns). A certain sense emerged from the bulk of the early material. I began to photograph towards that emergence, culminating in a model of 5 print linear strips, interrelating with each print having two separate image areas. The separate areas consisted of an upper larger more dominating picture space, balanced by a segmented smaller strip of five frames that packed more information in its space than the upper counterpart.

The relationships between the large and small image areas on each print and within the five print linear arrangement worked out to the following shorthand:

A	B	A	D	D	(upper picture space)
B	C	C	B	E	(lower picture space)

In the larger grid system, each strip had to interlock with the surrounding visual vocabulary based on shape, content, color, and broader "block" relationships that sections of the grid tended to project and isolate.

It must be emphasized that the foregoing model developed out of the images themselves; not from an arbitrarily imposed preconception. Understandably the raw photos followed a stylistic consistency. The adoption of the grid provided for a structure but all alignment was born out of the resultant synthesis of the conventions and the raw image essence.

Problems in the grid ranged from the aesthetic decisions regarding number of five print strips; the interlocking factors; and the final presentation format. Since grid systems are tight, by definition, the precise selection of prints in regard to the characteristics of the surrounding images is highly important. As work progressed towards the final stages, it became increasingly difficult to select those images that would satisfy the demands of the grid and the inherent rules established by the already placed images. Selection of the final two images concluding the grid was possibly the most pleasureable and at the same time, exacting. I decided that a firm termination was in order, that the grid should end unequivocally and not extend in its pattern, ad infinitum. Visually that called for a radical change in the image utilization, yet at the same time, something that worked with the previously placed

prints. Reversing the next to last upper image and then slashing its face with an overlaid contact strip effectively accomplished the final print. Because the work was slick and almost cartoonish, the method of presentation was quickly narrowed to encasing the material in plexiglass. Coupled with that aesthetic consideration was the fact that color prints are highly unstable and plexiglass is the only easily available protection against the attack of ultra-violet light.

Technically, the thesis introduced possibilities of "crossed curves" in the use of transparency materials for projection printing. Abberations and general difficulty due to increased contrast and variable color shifts continually surfaced. Mechanically, the contacting 35mm negative strips and the subsequent projection printing onto one piece of printing paper introduced a double problem of balancing and exposures. Of course, the tedium involved in waiting for a color print to develop on a drum is exacerbated by the previous double masking, balancing, and exposure. When a print falters in its expectations, frustration can become acute.

Utilizing the same color enlarger became a must. Fortunately, I had the use of the same machine throughout the duration. Occasionally it would be necessary to use another darkroom..which would only turn into an exercise in psyching out filters and timers. Color printing can be a bore.

The darkness of a color printing room can become a lesson in sensory deprivation if a radio is not at the ready.

Previously, it was mentioned that original thesis considerations involved a sense of dance energy and sexuality. It might be wondered where those notions found themselves in this thesis, if at all, and if my own personal intentions were satisfied. I mentioned finding a certain particularistic imagery. Such images can be metaphors, though any attempt on the part of a viewer to see dance energy and sexuality in the present work assumes that responsibility upon himself. There is a sense of immediacy, a sense of banality in the images. Possibly there is a bit of confrontation, hopefully some electricity. There is no statement. Merely an infatuation with what is there. That too can be a problem.

Conclusion:

Sicilian salami is hard, compact, and pungent. Do you know sicilian salami? Compact. Engorged.. Tight. Wrapped. Aesthetic Experiences are found in Delicatessens. Its all in the frame. You cannot ignore its presence. Nothing extra. Sophie sells Sicilian Salami. She could sell photographs. At two dollars and thirty-nine cents a pound, her salami is worth every challenge to the buildup of cholesterol. Salami is informational exchange through a tight, compact, minimalist synthesis of form, function, and content. Know her salami and you will know photography. Its all in the frame. Salami is performance.

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PAPILLOMAS, WARTS, AND RELATED NEOPLASMS

i suppose its appropriate to hang one's thesis so i'm going to do just that Wednesday evening Aug 29th. pleeez scuse the ditto format of this announcement, but the thesis presentation is a hanging, not an opening. Instead, i plan to give a short summary and talk in the Booth Auditorium at 8 pm that night at the School of photographic arts and sciences..thereafter you are invited to walk up to the third floor of the photo building and look at my pix in the M.F.A. gallery.

here's looking at you kid

jba

rochester, new york

august 21, 1973

Good Evening. I'm glad that you could attend. This is my graduation. It could be yours. This evening I would like to show you a short film from the recent production, "Celebration City." But prior to that screening and our subsequent departure for the MFA room, I want to dwell somewhat on some of the contributions of that founding father of sociology, Emile Durkheim. His contribution to sociology was a significant development of a rational and methodological set of analyses of the human social condition, called structural-functionalism.

Rooted in the concept that the content or values of a given social sphere are based upon the social structure at hand, structural functionalism illuminated the institutional, moral, and technological networks of our societal existence. The energies and forces that these networks provide are intrinsic to the frameworks if you will, of our condition.

On a more complex examination, it becomes clearly evident that we live not within simplistic formulae of pregnant structures constantly giving birth to content, but that we operate on this space ship earth in a dynamic equilibrium coupled to an energy level or flow that requires specific parameters or boundaries of any given activity. The nitty gritty of basic bodily functions reveals this operant condition. Nerve impulses travel through a defined playground of continuous negative and positive interchange. Our membranes maintain a non-static balance through active dialysis. And our energizers, the endocrine enzymes function through a complex give and take of chemical challenges.

We ideally perform in association with our structure and since we are human beings, with the gorgeous opportunity to move our thumbs as no other animal can do, we can determine and measure those levels of association, those boundaries or parameters of our actions, those qualitative concerns of human activity within a structural scheme.

On a simplistic level, the automobile driver approaching a red light has a somewhat precise set of parameters in which to function. It is his ability in choosing the most helpful energy level and activity that can maximize those elements within that boundary, namely the moving car, pedestrians, other traffic, and his own vehicle's limitations. Chances are that if the driver's abilities match the expectations at hand he will remain alive in order to enjoy the next intersection. Within a greater conceptual framework, if that driver perceives that his abilities are different or not in equilibrium with the limits of a given driving situation, he can either elect to stop his car and hail a cab or on the other hand, extend his potential and drive on a race track. The object in all this is to maintain an energy level that seeks the potential of the elements at hand. More thorough explanations of set theory are to be found in the literature of Play theory. And it is with Play that I would like to extend our discussion from the task orientation and possibly growthless nature of daily car driving to the Play that is inherent in our efforts to work on those projects, use those energies that are devoted to creating and providing for generative activities..those works, and mediums that are intrinsically cancerous, that come of themselves, that in short can be defined as learning as "peak experiences," as critical and creative functioning in which the making of works of art, in which teaching, and most activity of higher education and human endeavor can be located.

Play is perhaps the foundation, the survival mechanism, the structure in which we can go beyond our everyday boundaries. For Freidrich Schiller, "Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly a man when he is playing." It is not warranted nor appropriate here, to go into a lengthy discussion on the theoretical nature of play. A recent treatise on the subject quietly concludes that, "While the experience

(of play) is probably the most important factor in our lives, we ignore its existence." (Csikszentmihalyi)

In the terms of play ~~heavy~~, human enterprise depends upon a continued dynamic between options and skills or if you will between form and content. It is an upwardly mobile set of specific parameters that have the exponential ability to break into new levels of experience, into new realities. Play is a combinatory experience, a maximal utilization of elements at hand to fit a given structure. At the same time, it is a vital force actively defining that structure and providing new sets of elements or new relationships of those elements at hand. A Pinter theatre piece by the time it finishes its course has honed down and refined all its words. No new lines are added by the last scene. No new foreign elements. Yet the generative structure, if you will, the combinatory nature, the Play of the play creates the masterpiece. Yet play in these terms is not mechanistic. It is not a continued preoccupation with its parameters. For the essence of play comes in its ability to sustain a state of "Flow" (Csikszentmihalyi) to engender a state of heightened awareness of Play itself, not of external controls or structures. Play is sensual. It is concerned with itself. It is rhythmic, like an orgasm it is a "temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own." Huizinga concludes that "in nearly all the higher forms of play the elements of repetition and alternation are like the warp and woof of the fabric."

If there is a rejection of the vibrancy of play, of the need for combinatory images in critical undertakings, if we reject our integrative and cybernetic potentials, if we fail to see the totality of play itself, of how we are put together, we then fail to see those highest levels of human performance that are earmarked by a continued interaction of form and content, of options and skills of the goals and avenues leading to total sensuality, to a total

commitment to the matrix of life itself.

.....

The quality of American life often prohibits play. We observed this past week that the Chinese soundly beat us at our own game. For the third year in a row, Taiwan's all star Little League shut out the best of America's bat swinging twelve year olds.

This past week, in America's vacuous living rooms, Raymond Burr, iron-sided his way through two hours of video-melodrama that was a salute to the mediocrity of American television.

This past week, David Bowie, the bisexual queen of London rocked the music world with his decision to terminate public performing. He left scores of glittering, moddish multi-sexuals searching for a new queen.

This past week, Richard Nixon spoke to the nation with calculated gobs of sincerity reeking of cloth coat language as he vowed, "It would be copping out for me to not continue in this great office."

This past week, national security and foreign policy came under one roof with the Kissenger nomination. There was speculation that the phone taps on Mr. Roger's staff would be removed so that updated versions could be installed.

This past week, has seen an unprecedented barrage of media announcements heralding a New York State Law that goes into effect September first, regarding drug usage. The nation's largest killer, the alcoholic on wheels goes free while the stiffest penalties in the history of the republic are slapped upon human behavior that enjoys thoroughly innocuous and protective social boundaries. Yet private morality in this country is continually labeled as criminogenic through the

And this past week, the Rochester Institute of Technology added on anew college to its amalgamated structure. It remains to be seen whether it becomes an industry backed old age home for retired professionals.

So, you might ask, what does all the above have in common. Well its evident that in each case, play has been forgotten. Common to baseball television, David Bowie's public, Nixon's behaviour, Kissenger's appointment, Rockefeller's law, and R.I.T.'s layer cakeitis, is the failure to regard the intrinsic nature of these activities or its means as their most significant identity..as opposed to the concern for external ends. It is the recognition of intrinsically worthwhile activity that is the very basis of play. And it is the failure of such recognition that makes whatever structures we have so laboriously developed become mired in the quicksand of a playless society.

.....

So, it is with some sadness that I address you tonight, for I see this common problem pervading the American lifestyle, taking root not just in fields of activity apart from us but in our midst. In puritannically founded America, play has always been looked upon with suspicion. Sensuality has been looked upon with horror. The reactions against the woodstocks of the sixties were not ones of fear, not reactions of horror, but reactions fed by an American frustration and jealousy towards those who could play.

I find that I am finishing a long 26 month stay at R.I.T. For two years, this institution has been the most important facet of my life, whether I have liked it or not. It would be correct for me to assume that after my diploma is mailed to me, that R.I.T. becomes the most trivial facet of my life, but that would be avoiding the issue.

I have invested over two years of my youth, my energy, and my anxieties here. There are some responsibilities I am afraid that go along with such a commitment. For it is indeed a commitment. Not only did I have a financial commitment to R.I.T. but then the institution saw fit to award me with an assistantship, a stipend, and accompanying responsibilities. By that action on the part of this school, R.I.T. assumed some responsibilities. And that in the long run is of more significance.

I have no regret that I have been at R.I.T. I have changed. I have worked. And I have had a full two years. R.I.T. has certainly been a major factor in such success. But I am not handing this university an apologia, I am not granting amnesty for those inequities that abound here, and I am not contributing to the myth that this is the best of all possible worlds. What I do want to contribute is a deep concern that the responsibilities that R.I.T. has assumed don't go unfulfilled, nor unanswered.

A learning institution must as its sole raison d'etre provide an uninterrupted house of educational worship. It must provide and give shelter to those who can divorce themselves from everyday affairs and work on the task of energizing ideas. The educational establishment traditionally provides the atmosphere so that students and faculty alike, can lose themselves in their pursuits. That does not discount the provision or even the basis for R.I.T. providing occupational and job oriented instruction for the needs of a modern society. Instead such a goal, possibly more specific and therefore more elusive than the ambiguous goals of liberal arts establishments, becomes a problem due considerable analysis.

Missing Page

DO NOT UNDERSTAND IS WHY THIS INSTITUTION ASSUMES THE PHILOSOPHY THAT IS AN EARMARK OF COLONIALISM, that philosophy that says, "Blacks can only be porters and shine boys, so don't bother to expose them to anything else." If we take that attitude, one limits the possible potential of R.I.T. students, if we say that our students only want to know how to be professional photographers or our students have enough professors, what more could they want, then we put ourselves in a risky state. One that could set us back several centuries.

I mentioned the responsibility that R.I.T. assumed upon my acceptance of an assistantship. It is thus. I have worked with hundreds of students as have other graduate students. I have seen them grow, become excited, and yearn for more, yet I see them beaten back by an unresponsive structure that does not permit play, does not permit new sets of parameters. I ask not that the institute live up to its responsibility to me, for who am I? They have no commitment to me. But it is to those students that I leave, that we all leave. It is to the incoming freshmen as well as the incoming graduate students, that R.I.T. must be held responsible. What guarantee do students see, what contract do they read in regards to a quality of education here. Who would think of leasing and buying a \$5,000 automobile without some backup, some recourse. Where is that in American education? Where is R.I.T.'s responsibility to provide for those students that come with expectations and find them unfulfilled? Where is the play element not only in student life and in the student activity of pursuit of knowledge, but where is it among the faculty?

Many institutions have as their checks and balance system a publish or perish law. For all its inequities, such a system insures a

vital lifeblood of iddas, of critical appraisal going on as an undercurrent to the mainstay of student learning. Where is this at R.I.T.? Sure there are examples of professors in each school but where is the commitment on the whole? Where is the energy on the administrative level that can be responsive to Play, if not responsive to the mere staggering financial burden?

Where is the leadership of an institution of this size? Certainly, the Goudy award in the Printing school isn't the only spark in the entire institute. I am sure that administrators have pat answers for my questions, but in an institution that is unrivaled in physical plant, that is unrivaled in potential, that has an ability to go beyond itself as a self-generative play place, it is sorely lacking.

R.I.T. could be the most dynamic learning establishment in North America, without sacrificing its technological basis, for technology is nothing without play to put it to work.

R.I.T. could within the arts, eclipse the contributions of the Bauhaus. But I am afraid that the enemy of play, called Compartmentalization takes its toll here. Compartmentalization, rigidity or the outlawing of combinatory play seems to flourish at R.I.T. Raised eyebrows accompany students in photography that wish to minor in ceramics or woodworking. Shakespeare and Dante are deemed irrelevant to image making. Department heads are reduced to running laboratories like hospital orderlies. Is it that if allowed in an operating theatre, our faculty might confuse a head for a stool sample?

Why is it that various departments here are run like fiefdoms of medieval Europe rather than as open learning centers for all. Is it that an insidious Skinnerism has reduced this faculty to the status of rats that viciously stake out their own territory for their own rewards?

And After all is said and done, the structures are made more responsive, the equipment rooms are open 24 hours a day, the professors are put on a round robin of interdisciplinary core courses, what prevents R.I.T. from remaining as Anthony Burgess said of another American institution, as just "a great mediocrity rather than a vast talentlessness."

We have learned from Watergate, that you cannot legislate morality nor administrative acumen. Quality depends by in large on the capability and strength, the foresightedness of the leaders of the personnel. And it is no different here. There should be a waiting list of appointments to this faculty. R.I.T. could and should have the pick of the crop. I do not propose to qualitatively judge our faculty, but it is a certainty that deadwood forms in the most uncanny spots no matter how the superstructure glistens.

It is not my intention tonight to analyze the Rochester Institute of Technology, but to plead for, to cry for, to hope for a recognition that the energy of quality, that play and form and content are dynamics in the learning experience. And that the conceptual framework of play can be directly applied to this institute.

Clearly, R.I.T. has a mandate, not from me, but from its incoming students, from those who are still in high school and hopefully from those who are not even there. And just as important, to those that I feel closest to, to the faculty that have guided me to my friends

both faculty and students both incoming and outgoing who have known and loved me, it is a mandate from them to R.I.T. that this institute move from its status quo from its compartmentalization, its laissez-faire attitude towards education, to a vibrant avante garde leadership position within all its disciplines.

So, I close tonight, with a public challenge to the Institute, to Dr. Miller, to the trustees, to Professors Englemann and Shoemaker, Hindson and others, to students, and to those that would contribute to this institute, to make R.I.T. a place for play, a place for unlimited horizons, a place for sensuality in thinking and in conceptualization.

For indeed, it would be ashame if R.IT. were to follow in the footsteps of George Eastman, and adopt the motto, "You push the button, we do the rest."

Thank you.

"Papillomas, Warts, and Related Neoplasms," Copyright Johathan Atkin 8/29/73
Given upon thesis presentation at Booth Auditorium, Rochester Institute of Technology.

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